

THE
Great Question :
OR, HOW
RELIGION,
PROPERTY
AND
LIBERTY
ARE
To be Best SECURED.

HUMBLY OFFERED

To the Consideration of all who are true Lovers of the
Peace of Church and State.

ZEPHAN. II. 2, 3.

*Before the Decree bring forth, before the day pass as the Chaff,
before the fierce Anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day
of the Lord's Anger come upon you.*

*Seek ye the Lord all ye Meek of the Earth, which have wrought his
Judgment, seek Righteousness, seek Meekness, it may be ye shall
be hid in the day of the Lord's Anger.*

L O N D O N

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Writ by D^r Woodroff Canon of Christ Church.

THE
Great Question :

REAL
PROPERTY

To be sold

TO THE
READER.

Being desired to *Write something like a Preface to this small Treatise, I shall only give it the Character, with which a Person of great Judgment, who had the Perusal of it, before 'twas made publick, thought fit to honour it, and that is, its being very good Physick for them who will take it : The Recipe comes from a very Ordinary Hand, but if He who alone is the Physician of Value gives his Blessing to it, I doubt not but 'twill Work well ; the Author wishes it as He doth, the Health of his own Soul : The great God, if it be his good Pleasure answer his Prayers for both.*

TO THE
READER

These ERRATA's the Reader is desired to Correct
with his Pen.

Page 2. line 2. for *carying* r. *carrying*. *ibid.* l. ult. after *is* add *in*.
p. 3. l. 18. for *slow* r. *flow*. p. 6. l. 15. blot out *I* before *gave*.
p. 14. l. 13. blot out , p. 19. l. 28. for *for* r. *from*. p. 20. l. 2. for
rightly r. *rightly*. p. 27. l. 13. after *us* add *all*. p. 34. l. 26. for *tone*
r. *alone*. p. 39. l. 1. for *happ* r. *happy*, *ibid.* l. 14. for *thappy* r. *happy*.

it was very good
for them who will take it: I be-
lieve it is a very ordinary Head, but if it be
is the Physician of Value gives his
to it. I doubt not but it will Work well: the
Author wishes it as the work, the Health of
his own Soul: I be great God, if it be his
Pardon give his Prayers for him.

THE Great Question.

I Have seen several Treatises of late, wherein the *Titles of Sovereign Princes* have been much agitated, and *Obedience from the Subject* very highly pleaded for, as the *Writers* had the Lot to be engaged in their *different Interests*, or the *Cause* they undertook was most likely to be advanced *by them*; and whatever otherwise the *Persuasion* either of the *Writers*, or of those for whom they *Write* were, yet the *Cry* is for *Religion, Property, and Liberty*, and how to reconcile and satisfy all, is *The Great Question*.

One would think upon the first View, could *any of their Interests* be fully secured, there would be ample *Content* given, and that *Party* for whom it should be determin'd, would most joyfully sit down under *such a State of the Question*.

But this, could it be, how unlikely soever 'tis, as things stand; were it determin'd thus in the behalf of *any one Party*, so as to set aside *all other Pretensions*, would go but a little way in what is aimed at: For is there any so *general Interest* of *any Party*, that Men would not again *divide upon it*? and what the *whole Party* pleads for in preference to *other Parties*, every one be apt to assume to himself in preference to *those of the same Party*: For admit but *Division* once, and grati-

se Men in it, and you do but shew them the way how to *divide still farther*, and never to cease carrying on the Partiality, 'till *Religion, Property, Liberty*, and whatever else can stand in the way, be *sacrificed to it*.

To prevent this, is what is endeavour'd in the Solution of this Great Question. And methinks how full soever of seeming intricacies it may be, yet *bad Men Ears to hear*, and were in good earnest for that, for which they seem to be spending all their Heats, there might be a *Temper* found to quiet every one, and both *Prince and People* might be at *Ease*, would they but act, by what they tell us they make their own Measures. My meaning is, would they but let *Religion, Property*, and *Liberty*, the Cry of the One, and what the other declares himself to be placed in defence of, (for so all *Princes* in some sense do) guide them in all Cases.

For what is there to be wist for, that a true sense of these would not procure?

Had *Prince and People* that *Awe of God and his Presence*; that *Reverence* they ought for his *Commands*; which is the plain Notion of *Religion*;

Had they that *just Opinion* they ought of themselves and their own kind, as they are all alike rational Beings,

of the same great Family,

made for Society and mutual Happiness,

invested in certain Rights and Priviledges,

as belonging to them, as such, and under the same Care and Providence of God their common Parent, which is what founds all *Property and Liberty*; how must this produce that *Impartial Justice*, which would give to every one what belongs to him, as thereby they are but preserving the same to themselves? How must it too lay the strictest Obligation upon Conscience to seek the Common Good of one another?

What therefore we have to do, is to consider whether there be any Common Rule or Standard for all these:

Now such a Rule there is, and 'tis but One; nor is hidden from

from us, neither is it far off: It is not in Heaven, that we should say, Who shall go up for us to Heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it: Neither is it beyond the Sea, that we should say, Who shall go over the Sea for it, and bring it to us? But the Word is very nigh unto us, in our Mouths and in our Hearts, Deut. 30. 11, 12, 13, 14. 'Tis what the Great Governour of the World deliver'd to be the standing Rule of Obedience to all Mankind, and is but the Comment on the Law of Nature, which the Gentiles are to themselves, Rom. 2. 14. And what our Lord, the Redeemer of Jew and Gentile hath made the Rule of his Kingdom; for so He tells us, Matth. 5. 17. that he came not to destroy, but to fulfill the Law: Only He rescues it from the false Glasses Carnal Men had put upon it, and restores it to that spiritual sense, in which the Great Law-giver first intended it, *ibid.* v. 21, 27, 33, &c. which is but the same He afterward clear'd up, teaching it to be from the inward Principle of Love, that all Obedience was to show, Matth. 22. 37, 38, 39, 40. And to accomodate this farther to the Notions of the Heathen, He gives the Paraphrase of the whole, in what was their great Maxim, viz. All things whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye even so to them: For 'tis but the same with that they had in the Negative, *Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*: Not to do unto others, what thou wouldest not they should do unto thee.

This is that Rule, which observ'd, would secure Religion, Property and Liberty, and at once reconcile all Differences, not so much by inclining Men to go over into the Perswasions, and divided Interests of one another, (which is the narrowness of most Mens minds, that nothing will serve them, but to have all without any more ado run along with them in their private sentiments and designs, as if 'twere not much better to bring things to some certain Standard that might fit them all) as by making the Interest of all to be but One.

Not but that still there may be various Lessons upon the Text, very different States and Constitutions in the World, and

as different *Laws and Maxims of Policy*, suited to the several *Climates and Complexions* of Men; but yet *this* must be the *Law* that must be the *ground of all*; *This* that to which the *several Interpretations* must agree, *This* what must give them *their true force*, and make them truly *useful to the Publick*.

As 'twas among the *Jews*, they had other *Laws*, their *Judicial and Ceremonial Law*; the *Law of their State*, and the *Law of their Church*, but both in subserviency to this: So here, whatever the *Civil*, whatever the *Ecclesiastical Constitutions* among *Christians* are, whatever, let me so speak, *their Statutes and Judgments*, yet 'tis in Subordination to what is herein prescribed, that those are to be kept.

'Tis *this* is that *Law*, that cannot grow *Old and Obsolete*: *Heaven and Earth may pass away, but this will still abide*: This and its *Comment, Love or Charity, can never fail*, 1 Cor. 13 8. *The Jewish Law* as distinct from this, you see had its *End*, for 'twas but *Temporary*, and to last 'till the times of the *Messias*; and the *Christian Law*, all of it, besides this, is to have its end too: For that's but the *Means of Salvation*, and can only bring us to *Heavens Gate*, is not to enter with us: *Faith* will leave us there, because to be turn'd into *Frailties*; but *Love to God, Love to our Brother*, (indeed 'tis that which makes up the *Joys of that Place*) like *God Himself*, the *Fountain of it*, will be *eternal*.

But 'tis not *Heaven* but *Earth* we converse in, though 'twould be *Heaven upon Earth*, would Men take out this *Lesson*. To see then, with respect to our earthly happiness, or the true enjoyment of our *Religion, Property and Liberty*, in which it consists, how far *this Policy* would reach.

And indeed, that we may come to the business we are aiming at, what could there be wanting to the *Content and Satisfaction* of all, if this *Law*, with the *Comment Love* would write upon it, were observ'd as it ought?

For is it possible, with respect to *God*, whose *Blessing* ought in the first place to be attended, to imagin that we should

should in the *Spirit of Love* apply our selves to a *faithful observance of all his Commands*, and that *He* who is the *Judge of all the Earth* should forget to do us Right: i. e. to give all the Returns of his *Grace and Providence*, his *Love and Affection* to such *dutiful Children*? Or,

Is it possible, with respect to Men, (whose Reason should teach them Gratitude,) to imagin that we should be giving one another all the Proofs of a most settled, *unbias'd, unalterable Love*, and that *Love should not beget Love*? Or, That that *active Principle* once set a working, should not exert it self in all the Effects of *Justice, Kindness, Pity, Charity*; or, to give it in a word that should best suit this, a word that seems to be the *Comment on our Nature*, as well as *on the Law*, all manner of *Humanity*?

A little more particularly to touch upon the good Effects of this *Law*.

Shall *Prince and People* have *no other God before him*, who gave this *Law*? Nothing which in the first place they propose before his *Honour and Glory*?

Shall they *set up no Idol of their own*? I do not say the graven or molten Image, but not so much as any thing of their own *Inventions*, whereby to provoke him to *jealousie*?

Shall they be careful, so *Love* would direct, to reverence his *Name, his Word, and Ordinances*, and whatever else he hath made himself known by?

Shall they give him his *Property* as in all these things, so in hallowing that day he hath appointed to his *Service*? Shall *Love* so act them herein, that what they do of this, is with all their *Heart, all their Mind, all their Soul*? And can he who fees this *Heart, this Mind, this Soul*, forget the *Affection* that is due to so just a zeal? Or,

Shall they give the Honour they owe to *Father and Mother*, and all who in any sence stand in that *Relation, Civil or Spiritual Parents*? Or shall those who are in this *Relation*, give back

back again that Indulgence and Tenderneſs of Affection which is due to Children?

Shall they have that tenderneſs for the *Life and Perſon, Fortunes and good Names* of Others, which they would Others ſhould have for them; and agreeable hereunto govern themſelves in *all parts of Juſtice*, and that ſo, as not to let the Deſires of their Hearts run out towards what were not ſo? And as 'tis *Iſa. 32. 17. Can ſuch a work of Righteouſneſs be any thing but Peace, and the effect of Righteouſneſs, Quietneſs and Assurance for ever?* Nothing but the *fulleſt Bleſſings* could be expected from the *great and powerful Law-giver*; Nothing but *Bleſſings* from and among our ſelves in ſo pious, ſo dutiful, ſo juſt, ſo innocent, ſo loving and peaceable a Behaviour.

Nor was it therefore without great reaſon, that *Mosès* gave that excellent Advice, *Deut. 4. 1, &c. Now therefore, hearken, O Iſrael, unto the Statutes and Judgments which I teach you, for to do them; For this is your Wiſdom and Underſtanding in the ſight of the Nations, which ſhall hear all theſe Statutes, and ſay, Surely this great Nation is a wiſe and underſtanding People. For what Nation is there ſo great, which hath God ſo nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?* ver. 6, &c. 'Tis with reference to the *Law*, of which we are diſcourſing, he there ſpeaks, even the *Ten Commandments* which he wrote upon two *Tables of Stone*, as 'tis particularly reſtrain'd, ver. 13. And to enforce all this to the Obedient, 'tis declared to be *the Covenant*, which God commanded them to perform.

Now then this being the *common Rule to them* and us, as is above touch'd,

It being our *Wiſdom and Underſtanding* to perform it,

It being what alone can make any *Nation great*,

It

It being too, what I must not pass by,
 what God hath declared to be his Cove-
 nant, and

that which alone can bring God nigh to a
People in all things that they call upon him for, why should we question the fullest Security to all our Interests, if we make good our part in this Covenant? Why should we doubt his presence with us, as well as with the Jews, if in all we do, we are with him? Why should we think he will not be always ready to hear us, if we have our Ears open to all his Commands? Or why (as 'tis Psal. 144. 15.) should we not conclude, Happy is the people that is in such a case, nay happy is the people whose God is the Lord.

But then 'twill be replied, Where was the people that ever was in such a case? We grant this must go a great way in the prosperity of any Prince or People: But where hath such a State ever obtained? Or doth it look like the Interest of any prudent Prince to trouble his Subjects with what may seem so much against the grain?

I think, were this granted, That it never was thus in any Nation, that will no way prejudice the Argument: For is it not sufficient, that the Law we have been speaking of, was capable of making them such? That 'twas the end of God in giving it, and that upon Obedience to it, He hath promised this should be the Effect? Besides, was not that People to whom that Law was given, so far in that case, as they conform'd to it? I think, he that reads their Story; their good and bad Success, the treatment they meet with from God, according to their Obedience or Disobedience to it; his Promises and Threats agreeable hereunto; and his Prophecies still behind of their being in such a case, upon their return to their Duty herein; As also to all the World with them on the same Conditions, will have little reason to doubt, but this is the Means, here the Method by which 'tis to be obtained.

Nor

Nor is it to be omitted, That as far as they acted agreeable to *this Rule*, it hath fared thus with other States.

For *what* was it gave the Birth to the Greatness of Rome, but that *strict Vertue*, that *Chastity*, and *Temperance*, and *Discipline*, i. e. the exact keeping to *this Law*, as far as they had the knowledge of it, that made them to flourish and encrease?

What rais'd Athens and Sparta, but the same Reverence for Vertue? And in all other places, where ever these have been in any degree the Standard, so long have they prosper'd. As on the other hand, where Lust and Luxury, Fallhood and Inhumanity, Pride, Ambition and Covetousness have prevailed, what hath been the consequence, but Ruine and Desolation?

Not but that we must so far yield the Objection, as to grant, that as things stand with most part of Mankind, (such are, the long bad Customs Men have lived in;

the Constitution of Armies made up of the most servile part of Mankind, which yet must be relied on in the greatest streights;

the Corruptions of the People in all Places, and of all Professions;

the Modishness of Vice so long practis'd by those of the Highest Rank;

the ill Habits that are crept into the Courts of Princes;

the corrupt way of doing Business almost in all cases) there cannot but great difficulties arise to him, who shall seriously set upon the work.

But will it not greatly remove the Difficulty, when it shall be consider'd, as 'tis there every good Prince will begin,

1. That 'tis the Work of the great God of Heaven and Earth, He engages in, and, if undertaken with this Contemplation of Gods being with Him, why should He doubt the Success?
'tis His Law the Prince enforces, and let him but do it with
the

the belief, that *He*, who is the great *Law-giver*, is the *Lord God*, who brought his People out of the Land of *Egypt*, out of the *House of bondage*; who did it for the *Jews*, and can do that, and as great things for any, that will be his *peculiar people* as they were, and what then can stand in the way?

Men doubt *God and his Word*;

do not really believe him to be a *God of Truth*, when they read all the *Promises he hath made to Obedience*, and yet think they shall not be made good to those who sincerely devote themselves to it. Let this therefore be the first thing, 'tis the *Foundation* on which *Heaven* it self subsists, and nothing can ever shake it, that *God*, the *Lord God* is the great *Law-giver*, 'tis *his work* that of the *Law*, which the *Magistrate* engages in, and *Heaven* and *Earth* may pass away, but one tittle or iota of it shall never fail: fail not we in the *Duty*, the *Rewards*, the *Happiness* and *Success* that must attend it, are sure. Again,

2dly. It is to be consider'd, That 'tis a *work*, that of *reclaiming Men* herein, however the *Corruption* be spread, and *long Custom* hath gotten the Possession, which is not so difficult; but that *humanly* speaking, it may be hoped for, if those who are in *Power*, are but in good *Earnest*.

For what is this, but, (to shew the practicableness hereof in what might seem most to deter,) with respect to their *Armies*, which are so much to be relyed on in the greatest *Difficulties*, and yet are made up for the most part, of the most *servile*, and *Mercenary* part of Mankind, and aptest to be seduced, what I say, is this, but truly to discipline them for service? For who are most like to go on bravely upon any attempt, the *Debauched* and *Profane*, who alwayes carry with them that *Enemy*, which will be too strong for them, in the *guilt*, that cannot but amaze, when in the *Purlieus of Death*: or the good and *Vertuous*, that fear nothing but *God*, and go on in the Assurance of *Victory* in this, or *Triumph* and *Glory* in another life?

C

Besides,

Besides, *Temperance, Sobriety*, and the like, what are they but the very Dispositions to *Strength*, and *Courage*, and *Watchfulness*? Hath it not been often seen, that *one Debauch* hath lost all the *Wealth* and *Honour* that Men have been labouring for in their *whole life*?

To think that 'tis not in the *Power of a Prince* to reform a *Camp*, is to forget the certain and easie Execution his *Laws* would find there, where all that is profess'd, is, *Obedience to his Will*, to live or die at his *Command*.

The *Rewards of Officers* are certainly as *fair Temptations* to be good, as to be bad: And the *Influence* their *Authority* and good *Example* must have on the *private Soldiers*, is what there is no disputing; and let the Prince but be sure he engages them not, but in a *good Cause*; and what is there such will not attempt? Alas, 'tis *Heaven*, and its *Crown* for which they fight, and they have too much *sense of Glory* to neglect such a *Prize*.

Let the *profane Fools* bluster and swagger high, but the *Fears of that Hell*, of which every *danger is the brink*, will damp them when they come to *Action*: And the Prince may as well trust the *Master* he lets them serve, the *Devil himself* I mean, as *those*, who in all they do, live as if they were immediately acted by him.

Such Men, the *best Cause it self* will but very little help out, because 'tis not *their Cause*; 'tis only *Sin and Hell* that they serve, and whatever the Cause be they die in, there 'tis they cannot but expect *their Pay*.

This therefore would be attempted with respect to them, As for the *Interest* of the Prince, so of all who are concern'd in *their Success*; and for the *reclaiming of Others*, the great *Corruptions of whose Manners*, and ill *Habits*, seem to render the *Work so difficult*, Let the *Decree* go forth,

Let *Judgment* to be executed on the wicked be certain and irreversibile.

Let

Let *Rewards* only attend the good,
and

let it be made the *distinguishing*
Character by which all Favours shall be given forth, that it
shall be where *Love*, and *Charity*, and *good Life* in any sort
shall recommend the *Candidate*,

Let him that *loves* or *gives Bribes*
be as *abominable* in the *Eye of the Prince*, as he is in *God's*,

Let it, in a word, be made the
Interest of all to be *good*, to be *sober*, and *honest*, and *godly* :
And how will *Interest* bow every *Heart* and *Knee* to the
Prince ?

Let to this the *Example* of the
Prince himself be added, and it made appear, That 'tis by the
same Vertues he desires to recommend himself to his *Prince*,
as he seems to desire the *People* should recommend themselves
to him by : And how smoothly would this make all things
go ? Where would there be any thing left to disturb *Religion*,
Property and *Liberty* ?

Where the *grievance* the *People* would complain of ?
Where the *distrust* the *Prince* should have of any of
his *Subjects* ?

Where would be (let me so express it) the *grievance*
too to *God* himself ? And if there were
nothing in which we griev'd or vexed his *Holy*
Spirit ;

nothing we did to separate him from us, What but
the most settled *Tranquility* could be among us ? What but
a *life* next to that which is *divine* ?

Nor let the *Prince* fear, which some *Achitophels* would suggest,
that it might spoil the *Hopes* he otherwise hath of
gaining the *Affections* of his *Subjects*.

For what is the *business* of that *Rule* to which he is to recover
them, but to teach Men the *true Exercise of Love*,
and make them agree in that *Vertue* and *Piety* which would
leave nothing for them to *quarrel with him* about : And what

room then will there be for *Resentments*, unless that offend, that he is intent at once on their *present* and *future good*, and by making them *good Subjects* to *God*, as well as to *himself*, is indeed helping them on to a more *glorious Crown* than what *their Allegiance* secures to him.

But if any still will be exasperated against the Sincerity of the *Prince* herein, it ought to be *his comfort*, that they are only *ill Men*, who can be displeased at him; and he needs not fear the disturbance *such* can give, whilst he shall make so many *good*, whose *Affections*, and what is more, the *Affections* of their *God* too, he shall hereby secure.

But if the *difficulty* of the *Work*, and the *hazard* the *Prince* may run, as to the *Affections* of his *Subjects*, if he tye them up too strictly to the *Rule*, will not enough discourage, there are *who* can turn the *Argument*, and make *Religion* it self plead against *Property* and *Liberty*, thus to be secured; and to *disparage* what is here offer'd at, they shall tell you, That all *this* is but *Morality*, and to urge That in a *Christian State* is to forget that we live by *Faith*, and are incapable of doing any thing acceptably, without *such Allowances*, as *that* shall make.

But as *St. Paul* hath said, with respect to the *Law*, *Rom* 3. 31. *Do we then make void the Law through Faith? God forbid, yea we establish the Law: So here, Do we then make void Faith by the Law? God forbid, yea we establish Faith.* So inseparable are *these*, that *one* cannot subsist without the other. 'Tis the *Law*, i. e. *Obedience*, or *Works* agreeable to it must confirm, give life to, and perfect *Faith*, *Jam.* 2. 17, 21, 25. and 'tis *Faith*, or a *Belief* in the *Merits* of *Christ*, and what he hath done in performing the *Law*, and suffering what was due to us for the breach of it, that must hallow our *Obedience*. We call not Men to the *Law*, as if they could attain to *such a Perfection* in their *Works*, as to be *thereby justified*; But must we not therefore call them to *what they can do*? Or may we not assure them of the *Divine Blessing*,
as

as far as *that* is promised to what they shall do with *sincerity*, if Men shall indeed give themselves up to such a *degree of Perfection*: Or, / to come lower yet, because it must be consider'd, That 'tis with respect to the *Policy of Men*, the *outward Peace and Prosperity* thereon depending, that we are discourfing. To come lower yet, may we not assure the *Blessing* even to *outward Obedience*, as far as we are warranted herein by the *Word of God*? For is it *any thing* but *outward Obedience* the *Prince* can take cognizance of? *any thing* but *outward Obedience* he can reward? *any thing* but *outward Obedience* Man can have in view in all the Remarks he makes of *Divine Providence*, as acting toward the *Righteous or Unrighteous*? Or, to reduce this expressly to the *Question* before us, is it *any thing* we understand by the enjoyment of our *Religion, Property and Liberty*, but the *outward Quiet and Freedom* that attends us in each of these? And could the *Law* be but *outwardly perform'd*, all the *outward acts of Impiety, Profaneness, Blasphemy, Violence and Injustice* be restrain'd, and instead of *these*, all the *outward Acts of Piety and Vertue* take place, what *breaking in*, or *going out*? What *complaining* could there be in our *Streets*? *Psal. 144. 14.* 'Twas all that *David askt* in that Psalm to the *effecting this*, viz. That he might be deliver'd from these *outward Acts* express'd by the *had of strange Children*, whose *mouth speaketh vanity*, and *their right hand is a right hand of falshood*, ver. 11.

Not but that 'tis to be hoped could Men be brought to *this*, that *outward Obedience* would not go alone; and as our Lord told the *young man*, they would not be far from the *Kingdom of God*, *Mark 12. 34.* Only why I insist on *this*, is, because *thus far* the *Magistrate's Power* can reach; *thus far* we all pretend to be able to go, and pretend only (an Argument which might be thought should prevail for what we are pleading) to *happiness* too, i. e. a *Right and Title* to any of God's *Blessings*, whilst we thus continue in the *things of the Law*.

And would the *highest Pretender* (that we may deny none the

the utmost Priviledge of his *Faith*) be but so *Spiritual* as to govern all his *Actions* by the *Comment of his Lord on these Commands*; would he bring all home to the *Principle of Love*, as He prescribes; he need not make the least *Question*, but 'twould be the *truest Evidence of his Faith*, that he thus complies with the *Morality of the Divine Law*.

Not that after all (that I may leave nothing to be cavill'd at by those, who talk so much of *Faith* in the most *sublime* and *spiritual sense* of it) the *Merit of Works* is to be insisted on, because when we have done all we can, we are *unprofitable Servants*, Luke 17. 10. and therefore are by *Grace* to be *saved through Faith*, Ephes. 2. 8.

But though we may, not with *reference to our Justification before God*, who sees the heart, and knows wherein we offend all, urge these as *Merit*; yet sure, with *reference to Men*, with whom we are joyn'd in *Society*, they are such.

'Tis the *only true Merit* we can have to recommend our selves by to our *Governors*, or one another; the *only Merit* too *Governors themselves* can have, that they take care that we and they live by *this Rule*; the *only Merit*, with respect to the *Publick*, that by so living we bespeak the *Peace*, which God hath promised to the *Observers of his Law*; and as to himself, who looks nearer into our *inward Obedience*, 'tis that without which we cannot assure our hearts before him, 1 John 3. 18, 19. there being nothing more trifling than to boast the *sincerity of the heart*, and the *excellency of Religion*, that is lodged there, if neither appear by their *Fruits*.

But what is all this ('twill be said) to our present Differences? Let *Morality* have its place and value, we all are for it; But 'tis ~~not~~ *Morality*, but *Religion* precisely speaking, that divides us; Not any thing either of the *first* or *second Table* we controvert: We all own a *God*, and his *Worship*, the *Reverence of his Name*, and his *Day* to be herein prescribed? We all own too, because we are guilty of the breaches of these, and all other his *Commands*; that

that there's *another Righteousness* by which we must be justified, than our own: We agree the *outward*, as well as *inward Duty* required in all these: These are Matters we all agree in, *our Differences* are upon *other Points*; and how then will such a *Determination* as you here give us, reach us in *what we are divided*? How will it, if it secures not *our Religion*, as you see it concerns it not in the sense we think this ought to be maintain'd, ensure our other *Property and Liberty*? That *Liberty of Conscience* we plead for, which should exempt us from the *Law*, as that *heavy burthen* or *yoke we are not able to bear*?

To this I answer,

1. That 'tis wholly to mistake *our present Differences*; wholly to mistake what 'tis, is the *Object of Liberty of Conscience* to argue thus; Forasmuch as the *Moral Law* is not that *heavy burthen*, that *intolerable yoke* that is hereby insinuated; no certainly 'tis the most *pleasant*, most *satisfactory* thing that *human Reason* can be busied in; *nothing* brings so much *Peace and Joy* to the Man, as the *Obedience* he pays to it; and however we are degenerated by the Fall, and so incapable of that *Perfection* which should crown our *Obedience*; yet its being but to *act according to Nature*, as far as we do it, must make it easie.

'Tis true, the *Guilt* and *Punishment* that attend *Disobedience*, are a very *uneasie yoke*, a very *intolerable burthen*; and 'tis the *Excellency of Faith*, the *true exalted Liberty of the Christian* to be set free from *these*; but then this is far from setting us free from the *Law it self*: No, 'tis the highest *Obligation to Duty* that our *Defects* are thus provided for, and must leave us *inexcusable* if we shall plead *Liberty of Conscience* from that, in the complying wherewith alone *Peace of Conscience* is to be enjoyed.

Indeed

Indeed the Apostle bids us *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*, and *not be intangled again with the yoke of bondage*, Gal. 5. 1. And he speaks this with reference to the Law, as appears Gal. 4. 21. But 'tis the *Ritual* or *Ceremonial Law*, as is plain from the whole purport of the Epistle: And to put an end to the Controversie, he concludes this whole Argument by establishing that which was *Moral*, Gal. 5. 14. And this he doth in Opposition to that *false Liberty* Men were too apt to pretend to from what he had been discoursing of the *other*: For so he expressly resolves it, ver. 13. *Brethren, ye have been called to liberty*; none calls more upon them to assert it than he did; but then he subjoyns, *Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another*: For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self*; which, as is above observ'd, must belong to the *Moral* still in force, and in abatement whereof no Liberty whatever is to be pleaded: Nay, 'tis observable farther, That *Obedience to this*, is called *walking by the spirit*, ver. 16. and the Joy that attends its performance, is the *fruit of the spirit*, ver. 22.

So that we see the *highest Liberty* of the Christian, is not to be exempted from, but restrained to this Law. And then as to the *other part* of the *Objection*, I Answer,

2dly. That 'tis the greatest mistake in the World to say, That 'tis *Religion*, and not *Morality* about which most of our Differences are. For what though the immediate Dispute be about *Matters of Discipline* and *Ceremony*, and the outward parts of *Divine Worship*, nay the very *Points* and *Mysteries of Divinity*; yet what is it but the want of *Morality* that carries on such Disputes to an excess? My meaning is, That 'tis the want of *Love* and *Charity* at the bottom, which run through the whole Law; 'tis the want of our due bridling our *Passions*, our *Pride*, *Ambition* and
Cove-

Conformity, the manifest breaches of *Morality*, that widen the Differences, and will not let us agree.

For were these honestly set aside; did *Humility*, *Patience*, *Meekness*, with those other *Vertues* or *Graces* of the Christian, influence all our *Actions*, our *Divisions* would soon be healed, and Men would not quarrel about lesser things, where the substance of *Religion* might be preserv'd. Nay the substance of *Religion* being preserv'd (and what is that but what is contain'd in the *Moral Law*?) all other Differences would of themselves fall. As why should he who professes himself to love God with all his Heart, all his Soul, all his Strength, all his Mind, so much forget his Duty, as to be beat off of his Worship, because another is not so well instructed as he thinks he is: One, as I apprehend, brings that into his Worship, which agrees not so well with that Spirit and Truth in which I think he ought to be serv'd; I speak with reference to this or the other Ceremony, this or that Form, this or that Habit or Posture, or whatever else we all esteem indifferent; But must I therefore hinder my good God of that part of Worship which he whose attainments are not equal to mine, thinks himself as much obliged to pay, as I do what I bring, and without which he conceives he cannot do it in Spirit and Truth? Be it (for I would give all the force that may be to the Objection) that his Service is not so perfect as mine, yet may it not still be true Worship? And can I say I love God with all my Heart, all my Soul, &c. and yet be willing he should be defrauded of any part of his Honour?

But suppose he likewise thinks that his Worship is that of the Spirit and Truth?

Suppose he cannot satisfy himself that he loves him with all his heart, all his soul, all his mind, all his strength, unless he gives Him an outward as well as inward Worship, must therefore God lose his Tribute on either hand? No, True love to God in this extent will rejoice in whatever way his Honour be advanced:

D

True

True love to God will make us ready to put the best Construction on whatever any of his Worshipers do :

True love to God will make us think so modestly of our selves, as to believe *He*, who is *so much Goodness* (as that is in him, for which we love him) may have revealed himself to *others*, as well as us : At least 'twill so operate, as to make us not over forward to *censure those who profess to love him as well as we do* : And what operates thus *on one side*, will operate the same *on the other*, and make him who thinks a Ceremony, a Form, a Habit useful, no more judge him who hath not hereto attain'd, than he would be willing himself to be judg'd for what he thinks himself obliged to. No, they would both carry it with the greatest moderation, and be zealous to approve this their love to God, by having love and charity for one another.

'Tis the Argument of the Apostle, *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar ; for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen ?* 1 John 4. 20. And can he love his Brother, if he be still censuring him ? Can he love his Brother, if he hath no tenderness for his weak or scrupulous Conscience ?

Can he love his Brother, if he be still laying a stumbling-block in his way ?

Can he love him as himself, if (were that the case) he were taking the advantage of every slip to make him fall ? Or, if fallen, he doth not rather study how to raise him up, than to thrust him still lower and lower ? To conclude this, Doth he love his God with all his heart, all his soul, all his mind, all his strength, and will he do nothing to imitate him ! Or can he rightly imitate Him, if he hath no forbearance for his Brother, for whom, as well as for himself, there is so great forbearance with his God ?

But is this then to reconcile all Differences ? Alas, there are Points in Controversie, that want particular Answers and Solutions ; Scruples there are among Christians, that will exercise

exercise the most profound Enquirer, and is this all that is to be said in that multiplicity of Disputes which have so much filled and distracted the World? Undoubtedly this must be the method, *love to God, love to our Neighbour* will answer all: For what though there be *several Perplexities and School-Questions* which we are not *Philosophers* enough to penetrate, yet if *they be not of the Essence and Necessity of Religion,* if *they be not what we are bound to understand, or if they find us in that temper of mind,* that whether we do or do not understand them, yet we are resolved they shall breed no difference, what is this to the disturbance of our peace?

Had God, whom we are thus to love, *seen it *absolutely necessary* for us all to be just of *the same mind* in every thing, why then did he leave any thing to be *indifferent*?

But because 'tis so hard to beat Men out of their *Prejudices*, let us see what 'tis that *occasions these*, that the great Mistake being once rectified, we may no longer stumble at *Noon-day*.

Now this will be best done, by considering what the *Occasion* hereof was under the *Jewish Oeconomy*: And what was that but the want of *distinguishing* between the *Moral and Ceremonial Law*? both which being for God, they did not so well consider the *different Sanction and Reason* of each, but (as Men are too apt to be taken up with *Externals*) they presently run into too high an Opinion of the *later*, forgetting the *weightier things* of the *former*; forgetting too, that I may at once shew the *grossness* of their Mistake herein, that 'twas the *Moral Law* was their *Covenant* between God and them, as hath been observ'd from *Deut. 4. 13.* and that the *Statutes and Judgments* given likewise to them by the *same Law-giver*, were but *subservient* to it, and that *till the time*, that what was *Type and Figure*, and only *preparatory* for better things, should have *their end*, and only what was *Moral* should continue still in its full force, and be advanced to that *Spiritual Construction* which our Lord gave it in his Sermon on the Mount.

And Men would do well to consider (I am sure this alone rightly consider'd, would make them far enough from setting up any thing *against or above the Moral Law*, but least of all *Faith*, that being but the *means* to carry us on to the *true performance of this*, and help us out where we come short of it, by directing us to the *Righteousness of another*,) Men, I say, would do well to consider, whether it be not *something like this* that occasions many of the *Prejudices under the Gospel*, that we do not *sufficiently distinguish* between *Precepts of a different nature*, but are apt to set them at variance with one another? whereas the Solution of the whole, is that of our Lord to the *Pharisee*, Luke 11. 42. *These ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone*: My meaning is, every thing is to obtain in its proper place; neither more than what is due, is to be given to *Circumstantials*, nor less than what is due to the *Essentials of Religion*: The Fringe of the Garment may adorn, but 'tis the Garment it self must cover our nakedness, and keep us warm.

Which being rightly weighed, would put an end to all Sctuples herein; For supposing first the *Moral Law* to obtain in the Comment the *Old and New Testament* give of it, I mean, *Love and Charity*; and the *Fundamentals* agreeable to the *Precepts* thereof to be kept to, we have the full state of that *Liberty of Conscience* the *Christian Magistrate* ought to give, (for *Love*, which is the *fulfilling of the Law*, will oblige to, and correct him in it,) and the *Christian Subject* (for *Love* in his Duty to his *Superiors* and *Fellow-Subjects* will thus influence him) ought to be contented with.

For what is it *Liberty of Conscience* respects? is it *the Law it self*, whercof we are discoursing, or onely *the Appendices of it*? the *Worship indispensibly due to God*, or the *manner*, and *external circumstances* in which it shall be exercised?

Or

Or with respect to *matters of Faith*, Are they the *Articles of our Creed*, the *Great fundamentals of the Trinity*, into the belief whereof every Christian is baptized? or are they certain *Opinions of lesser moment*, and no way necessary to *Salvation*, whether held the one, or the other way, that this *Liberty* consists in?

I think it will not be said, I am sure with any the least reason it cannot, that 'tis either the *Law it self*, and the *Divine Worship* therein commanded; with those other *moral duties of eternal Obligation*; Or yet the *Articles of our Creed*, the *great Fundamentals of the Trinity* into the belief whereof every Christian is baptiz'd: And as for any thing that is mere *Appendix and Circumstance* on the One hand; mere *Opinion*, and not at all necessary to *Salvation* that it should be believed on the Other, nothing but the want of love to Peace, a defect in that *Charity*, which is the fulfilling of the *Law*, and without which we mock God and man as often as we repeat the *Creed*, can betray men to endless disputes and janglings about these, or tempt them to divide and separate upon them.

I lay this down in common to all, as well to those who shall give, as those who shall take the Offence; and the reason of it is, because 'tis indeed to deny the end and effects of all true Religion, which is to make us unite and agree, if we shall disunite and disagree upon what is not of the *Essence* of it.

Do we, (that I may touch upon one part of the *Creed*, which takes in all the rest, and indeed the whole frame of Religion with it;) do we profess our selves to believe a Church, and the Communion of Saints in it, i. e. that there is one *Mystical Body*, of which we all are under our Head the Lord Christ, and thereby members in particular, 1 Cor. 12. 27. and is it consistent with either the Being or well-being of those who are in such a relation, as to Him their Head, so to one another, to be rending off quick Members from the Body? or can it be without certain Death to the

Men

Member that is so fevered, and as certain pain, and danger to the Body, from whence 'tis rent? must not such a wound sink deep, and leave at least a lasting Scar behind it?

But then, that we may hold to our point, what is it but some failure in this Law of Charity, that can produce this? What but a meer Spirit of Contention, if the hazard being so great, Men shall heedlessly run into it? A Spirit of Contention, I say, for is it not so, when no consideration of what they contest for, being neither of the Necessity, or Essence of Religion, or that in which Church-communion properly consists, shall be able to withhold them from Divisions?

I would not offend, but what can it be else but this? Men's loving to be of a party, which it self is contrary to the Law of Nature, and that Humanity which in the good effects of it is a debt we owe in common to all; what I say else can it be, when the things about which they differ are on all hands own'd to be indifferent, when it may be too, it shall be confessed that there is nothing sinful in the Communion, to which they are invited, and yet they shall still stand off? I would turn the Question, and say the same to the Imposers of such things, as well, as to those whose compliance is called for: If they shall too highly insist on things of a middle nature, and lay that burden upon the Conscience, which is contrary to that Law, whereof they are Guardians, the same guilt will rest on their actings: For Charity call'd for on either side, would tell us all, that we ought to suffer long, and be kind, 1 Cor. 13. 4. that we ought not to envy: not to vaunt or be puffed up: that we ought not to behave our selves unseemly, ought not to seek our own: ought not to be easily provoked; ought to think no evil; ought to rejoice only in the Truth; ought to bear all things, to believe all things, endure all things, v. 5, 6, 7.

And were this our Temper, what occasion would there be of Strife? 'twere impossible if we would respectively apply

apply this in all our *Scruples*, that there should arise any insuperable doubt amongst us :

*Tis because Men are of a Party :

*Tis because Men are not sincerely kind :

*Tis because Men are over-run with Envy, Pride and Ambition :

*Tis because Men are Selfish, and think all the World, nay, Religion and its Priviledges too made only for themselves :

*Tis because Men have their Passions to gratifie :

*Tis because Men too much think and imagine evil :

*Tis because Men rejoyce not in the Truth :

*Tis because Men are peevish and forward, are suspicious and ill natur'd :

*Tis because Men are Censorious, and can ('tis a bad symptom on their own Temper, for generally 'tis the Conscience they have of themselves, makes them to think others as bad as themselves) scarce believe any thing that is good of others, because they are not so Candid to hope the best, and have themselves no Patience to endure any thing in a good Cause.

These, let what will be the pretence, are the Reason of all our Differences, and the taking place of the contrary Virtues, i. e. those excellent Effects of Charity, as the Apostle there enumerates them, would be a common Remedy for Prince and People, a Cure that would reach the whole State.

This without any more ado would bring us all to a Temperament in Religion, and as the Psalmist speaks, *Psal. 120. 5, 6, 7.* we should no longer have occasion to say, *Wo is me that I sojourn in Mesecth, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar. My Soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace : I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for War.* No, there would be nothing but the fairest Correspondence among us all : Charity would answer every scruple, and decide all on the side of Peace : 'twould do it, not so much by taking the Chair, and resolving all the Niceties of the Schools, (there would be no need of that, those

those would be given up as unnecessary Subtilties) but by leaving nothing for us to dispute about.

But is this such a mighty Matter, that it should be offered with so great Assurance? Who is there could not have given the Advice? or hath it not been again and again urged?

But if urged ever so often, if Men have not taken it; if the time for its being listen'd to, hath not yet come; if Men have not had Ears to hear, let the season of the Advice at last prevail, let the many dangers with which we are surrounded, the many Disappointments the Publick hath met with for want of its being attended to, at length open Mens Ears.

But whose Ears, 'twill be said, can be open'd to this, which hath been so often begun, but so little succeeded? hath it not been almost the constant Cry of the Nation for a Reformation, and have not Men fairly set out towards it? but what still hath been the Effect, but that Disorder and Confusion, which should thereby have been prevented?

And would we know the Reason? 'tis because such a Work was never any more than begun; because Men made use of the Name to serve any thing else but the true Interest of Religion, and fought no farther, than to Reform themselves into good Places, and profitable Offices and Employments; thus far we can shew our Zeal for God and his Law, as to think it most reasonable to chase away the Wicked that stand in our way, but how doth our Zeal flag, when we are minded of those Vices in our Selves, which were so odious in Others?

But why this still with so much vehemency? are there no other Expedients whereby to secure Religion, Property and Liberty? none who are able to advise for the good of the Publick? the great Councils of the Nation, who should best know our Minds and Interests, let them, they are the Representative Wisdom of the whole Body politick; let them meet

meet and consult what is most for the *Service of the Publick*: And in the Name of God let it be so, none so fit for *such a Work*; but let them be sure, if they will ever do us any good, to take God into their Councils; and to do that, they must make *his Law* whereof we are discoursing, the Rule we are to walk by.

But because they are not always in being, may there not be some among us who are wise enough to serve all *Emergencies*, and provide for the *safety of the whole*? And for the carrying on so good a work, *Lives and Fortunes* are the least we can offer; and 'tis a good Bargain if *Religion, Property and Liberty* be the real Return we have for it, a *Price* well paid, if the *Purchase be Ensured*.

And what is it then that *can ensure* it? Why let but us have the *menage of Matters*, saith one party, and we will be your *Bondsmen* for it: Let us, saith another, and we will defend you from the common *Enemy*, and from *whoever else* bid for it.

But see then how in the very first offer, *Religion, Property and Liberty* are assign'd over to them who profess to ruine them all? For what is, *Let us have the menage of Matters*, but in other words, Let us be the *Oppressors* to engross all these to our selves, to exclude all others who will not run with us into the same

Excesses, to ruin them in their *Reputation, Fortunes and Lives*, if they give not up themselves to our Wills, nay and to Damn them too, if they think not all this to be the very *Spirit of Religion*, and the only *Genius of a true Reformation*.

But will this then do the feat? Could the *Tide* all run on one side of the shore, would it be a security that there should never rise a *Storm*? Or must we not rather give credit to what we read, *Isa. 57. 20.* That *the wicked are like the troubled Sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt*? To follow our Metaphor, see whether this is not most so, when the *Tide* runs only to *one bank*? Would they who are so rest-

less to gain Power into their hands, have just enough for every one? Would not the same Ambition that acts the *whole Party*, be apt to act them *every one* in particular, and make them look upon themselves as the best Menagers of the *whole Party*?

No, there's no possibility that there's *any Party* should acquiesce in what it hath gained: the whole World would be still too narrow for *Alexander* to breathe in: the Places of Profit and Honour, or whatever else leads such Men, would be too few or too mean to answer their *growing Merits*.

What then is to be done? Must no body manage Affairs? God forbid we should be so sent to Sea, as neither to have Sail, nor Helm, nor Pilot to guide the floating Hulk: No, certainly some there are who ought to sit there: But must they then be of *neither Party*? There's the unhappiness still, that we know not how to speak of Men, but under some *distinction* or *division*: But however this is what must be settled, That they ought to be of *neither Party*: No, 'tis only uniting and consolidating all Interests that can make us happy: Such they must be (if such the Age hath) that are of publick Spirits, narrowed neither to the Capricio of the *one*, nor the Superciliousness of the *other*, of that universal Charity that will carry them out to such a reverence for *Religion*, *Property* and *Liberty*, as to let these not only in *name*, but in *reality* influence all their Actions: For *Religion*, *Property* and *Liberty* will do all, and whosoever hath a *Conscience* for the *first*, will have it equally for the *other two*.

Methinks the Character *Jethro* gave to *Moses* of those whom he should employ, might a little direct in our Choice: *viz. That they be men that fear God, men of Truth, hating Covetousness*, *Exod. 18. 21.*

Whatever the *Party* be of which Men are reputed, if this be not their Character, there will be but little good to be expected from them: Men that have not the *true sense of the Divine*

Divine Majesty, the *Awe and Reverence* that is above all due to Him who is *King of Kings*: Men who *hate not Falshood*, all the poor Tricks and Cheats of Carnal Policy; *lying, shamming*, and *imposing* upon the World with such thin-spun Cobwebs, which at once shew, as the *Venom* of the *Creature* that *weaves* them, so the *Vanity* of those who trust in them: Men too whom a *Bribe* or a little unjust Gain will make to set *themselves*, and *their Souls*, as well as the *Publick*, to sale: These are those that *no Party* ought to value, *no Party* can be secure in.

Let us see therefore if there be not some more *general style* to speak by: Let it be that of *Men and Christians*: 'Tis but to make us agreeable to *these Names*, all that we have been saying tends to: *Names* that we would be very unwilling any should rob us of, and *Names* they are which would fully secure us our *Religion, Property and Liberty*.

For *being Men* in the true Notion of that word, would teach us that *Humanity* which would exclude all sort of *unreasonable Passions or Resentments* against one another: *Being Christians*, would teach us, That with all *lowliness, meekness* and *long-suffering*, *forbearing one another in love*, we should endeavour to keep the *unity of the spirit in the bond of peace*.

And I perswade my self, this is the *very Reason* why we and other People have been so tost to and fro, emptied from Vessel to Vessel, and by *Divine Providence* (for think we what we will, God will be taken in in all our Politicks) are permitted still to discover that ferment of Affections which so variously works in Men of several Perswasions, that at last by our returning to this state the *greatest Unity* may be brought out of *Discord*, the *greatest Order* out of *Disorder and Confusion*.

I perswade my self, I say, that 'tis for some great Good, God in his wise Providence hath suffer'd this to come upon his Church: As why, among other things, may it not be to shew us, that we are none of us hitherto so in the right way, but that there is a more *Christian state* we are still to aspire

after ; when the *Wolf* shall dwell with the *Lamb*, and the *Leopard* lie down with the *Kid*, Isa. 11. 6. or as it follows, ver. 13. *When the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off, Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.*

And let not Men deceive themselves in thinking otherwise ; let none mistake their *Envy* for *Zeal*, and imagin the *vexing of others* can be the means to preserve either *Religion*, *Property* or *Liberty* : No, the Prophecy is, ver. 9. *They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain* ; the Church is that *Holy Mountain*, as 'tis to be then *highest* in the World, and that which shall make it so shall be that *universal Charity* which shall diffuse it self through the Lives of its Professors : For that is, as it there is added, for the *Earth to be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea* : i. e. for it to run in its *natural Channel*, and that with the *greatest abundance* : And what is the *natural Channel* of Duty, but as it immediately respects the *Divine Law* ? And, according to the Comment of the *Holy Ghost* on it, both in the *Old and New Testament*, it springs from *Love*.

For this is indeed to *know God*, when we make this the *Principle of our Obedience* to Him, shutting out all mean and private respects, all little pitiful *Ends* and unworthy *Designs* from a share in that *Nobler*, that *more Sublime* and *Spiritual Service* we yield either to him the Fountain of all *Love* and *Goodness* : (Names that speak what is *most communicative* and *beneficial to all*) or to our Brethren for his sake.

And the good Lord open our Eyes, that we may at length see how contrary every thing of *Envy*, *Strife* and *Division* is to all *Religion* : For 'tis to be carnal, and walk as men, not as *Christians*, 1 Cor. 3. 3. And how fatal to any Church or State this must be : For as 'tis Gal. 5. 15. *If ye bite and devour one another, take heed ye be not consumed of one another* : Nay, take heed, let me say, lest ye bring in others to do it for you. It may be, nothing but a *common Enemy*, the overthrow at once

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of our *Religion, Property and Liberty*, will reconcile us : There hath been a *time* when the fear of such things made us to begin to think of uniting ; I wish there be not more of it behind to compleat our *Union* : If *Concord* among *Brethren* be not otherwise to be hoped for, we must be content to submit to the *Rod* of our Father for it.

But 'twere to be wisht, it might begin from our selves, that looking upon this as the *Reason* why no greater Success hath hitherto gone with any *Property*, any *Liberty*, any *Religion* that hath been among us, we would make the Experiment once of returning to this *Law of Love* : Let me put it in the words of God by his Prophet on the like occasion, *Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it, and I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, Mal. 3. 10.*

And let neither *Prince* nor *People* deceive themselves in thinking that any thing else will do it : For can we think that God, the God of Love, God that is Love, will joyn with us in our *Piques* ? Is *Christ* divided, that we should think it for the Honour of our *Reformation* to cherish that *Partiality* which will first or last dash us all in pieces ?

I had thought the design of crying up *Religion, Property and Liberty*, had been to have joyn'd us all in some *Common Interest*, not to have made these fight against one another : I had thought it had been love to God and man, good-will and peace upon earth, that had been hereby intended to reflect back glory to God in the highest ; And is all to end in a *Party* ?

Do we think it becomes the *Majesty of the Great God of Heaven* to be called down to abett a *Faction* ? Or is it in order to that general concord among Christians, that *Philadelphian state* we expect in the later days, we appeal to his Throne ? If so, let us remember, I must observe it again, That it must be by *Love fulfilling his Law* : 'Tis only this
can

can give us a title to his *Affection*, only this can settle ours towards one another.

But it may be 'tis not yet the *season*, 'tis a little too hasty to call us from *greater Affairs*, the *Concerns and Preparations for War*, and the *necessary Defence of our Country*, to attend such a work ; Let things be a little better settled, and when we have *leisure*, this shall not be forgotten.

But *who* is it then that must settle things for us ? *Who* was it brought the greatest *Order out of the Chaos*, or can throw any the most settled *State into Confusion*, if he pleases, that we should question where to apply in such *streights* ?

Or do we think the way to *establish our selves*, is to put *God and Christ* in the mean time *beside the Throne* ?

Do we think *He* that hath done so *great things* for us, will be contented still to let us be doing *other things first* ?

Are *our times* in *our own* or *his hands*, that we thus procrastinate in what we pretend to be *rais'd up by him for* ?

Or, with respect to the *Instruments* who are to be made use of to effect this by, is it by *those whose lives* speak them to have the least reverence for *Religion, Property and Liberty* ? or at the best, to mind *those* no farther than they serve their *private Interest*, I wish I could not say, and *Lusts* too, we hope to prosper ? If it be a *true Reformation* we are designing, let us consider *who* are fit to work with the *Lord*, *whom* we may imagin he will accept to appear for him, and fight his *battels*, and by whom 'tis *Prince or People* may hope for *Success*.

I will not deny but that *those* who answer not such a *Character*, may sometimes be very *prosperous in their Undertakings*, because they are *such* (as may be seen in all the *Histories of Kingdoms and States overthrown or changed*) whom *God* generally makes use of as his *Scourges* ; But this is so as to be themselves within the reach of the *lash*, it being the *equal concern* of that *Divine Justice* which employs them to be its *Executioners on others*, to be avenged on them for their *Impieties*,
when

when their iniquity shall be full, Gen. 15. 16. And so the Prophet states it, Jerem. 12. 1, 2, 3. *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee : yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments : Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper ? Wherefore are all they happy who deal very treacherously ?*

Thou hast planted them, yea they have taken root : they grow, yea they bring forth fruit ; thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins.

But thou, Lord, knowest me ; thou hast seen me, and tried mine heart towards thee : Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter.

But this, I hope, is what we would not have to be our case ; it imports us therefore, that laying aside all the flatteries of present Success, were that as great as our hearts could wish, we would consider a little who they are by whom we may hope to establish our Religion, Property and Liberty, by whom either Prince or Subject may hope to be thoroughly settled : And who can those be but the *Just, the Chaste, the Temperate, the Pious*, those especially who, according to the Rule given Deut. 23. 9. *When the host goeth forth against the enemy, keep them from every wicked thing ?* (for we know what one Achan did to the troubling of Israel, Josh. 7. 25. And if an Army be made up of such with whom the Wedge of Gold, and the Babylonish Garment weigh more than either Religion, Property or Liberty, what can be expected, but that every Valley should be that of Achor, only trouble and disappointment accompany our Arms ?) it being what will be always true, That *Righteousness* (a word that will take in our Obedience to the whole Law of God) exalteth a nation, but *sin* is a reproach to any people, Prov. 14. 34.

It was promised to the Jews, If they walk'd in God's Statutes, and kept his Commandments, Levit. 26. 3. that he would give them peace in the land ; and they should lye down, and none should make them afraid, ver. 6. And ver. 7, 8. That they should chase their enemies, and they should fall before them by the sword ;
and

and five of them should chase an hundred, and an hundred of them put ten thousand to flight. And when at their great Solemnities of Religion they should be obliged to absent themselves from their Borders which lay most expos'd to the In-road of the Enemy, 'twas likewise promis'd, That *no man should desire their land*, *Exod. 34. 24.* And what was thus promis'd, God never fail'd to make good to them while they held to *this Rule*: And is it not he who hath asserted to himself to be *the Lord, who changeth not*? *Mal. 3. 6.* Why then should we think that any thing else but *this should qualifie* for Success? Why should we be *such Infidels* as to doubt that, if thus qualifi'd, He, who is *immutable, always the same, and cannot deny his Word*, should do it for us?

Would we know the Reason why the *great Monarchies of the World* have successively felt their *Changes*, we have it *Dan. 2. 44.* 'Twas because in the days of those *Kings, the God of Heaven set up a Kingdom which should never be destroyed, a Kingdom that should not be left to other people, but should break in pieces and consume all these Kingdoms, and it should stand for ever.* 'Twas *this Kingdom, a Kingdom of Righteousness*, that they oppos'd, and therefore could not stand. Had they submitted to *this Kingdom* as thus set up by the God of Heaven, *Mene, Mene, Tekel* could never have been the *Hand-writing upon the Wall against them, Dan. 5. 25.*

And may it not be for this very cause, that Men *submit* not to *this Kingdom*, the *Kingdom of our Lord, the Messiah*, or anointed one, as he is styled, *Psal. 22.* as 'tis to be a *Kingdom of Righteousness*, as this is *his Scepter, Heb. 1. 8.* That the *Potters Vessels are dashing in pieces, Psal. 2. 9?* For I cannot otherwise express those Catastrophe's we in our days have seen in Christendom, and are like, I fear to see *more such*, if a *timely Reformation* do not prevent.

I know, to Men of *common Politicks, all this*, and could a Man add to it all that the *Prophets of God* have said on the *same Argument* for they met with the *same Treatment* when
they

they did it, will be lookt upon as *Cant* and *Enthusiasm*, or whatever other *reviling* style those who know how to ridicule every thing that looks towards *true Religion* shall think fit to bestow on such as *sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the land*, Ezek. 9. 6. And whatever you shall talk of *Reforming*, 'tis their *Armies* and *Stores*, their *Friends* and *Alliances*, their *worldly Interests* they will still relye on: Give them but the *longest Sword*, secure them but the *strongest Party*, if with all their *Wisdom* they could tell which that is, (I am sure 'tis hard to do it here, and hath been the constant Experiment, to look no farther back than these last Thirty Years that hath been still trying among us, and hath as often failed) and they will give themselves *Success*.

But then I cannot but ask, Where is *Religion*, where is *Property*, where is *Liberty*, whilst Men act by such Principles? 'Tis *Oppression*, 'tis *Cruelty*, 'tis *Injustice*, 'tis *Pride*, 'tis *Ambition*, 'tis *Uncharitableness*, the highest *Prophaneness* and *Infidelity*, where ever Men thus steer: And I doubt not, if Men still will hold to these *weak Designs*, God will in his due time infatuate all such *Achitophels*, and let them see what 'tis to leave Him out of their *Councils*.

But what is it then you offer, will Men say, that at length we may be in the harbour? that we may fit out our *Vessels* and lift our *Soldiers*, and promise *Success* to either?

Why who can offer more than God and his good Spirit have been pleas'd to offer? And what is that but what I have already enlarg'd on, that we return to the Lord our God, and be obedient unto his voice? Deut 4. 30. Or as 'tis given in the last Prophet before the coming of the *Messias*, That we should remember the Law of Moses the servant of God, which he commanded him in Horeb, Mal. 4. 4. as being that alone by which the hearts of the fathers are to be turn'd unto the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or as 'tis in St. Luke's Paraphrase, The disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and that,

(as it there follows) *to make ready a people prepared for the Lord, Luke 1. 17.*

As what so likely to prepare us for a settled Peace expressed thus by the *turning of Mens Hearts* towards one another, what so likely to prepare us for *Christ and his Kingdom*, as thus to *make his and our paths straight*, Luke 3. 4. to rectify **every thing** that is crooked by this right line, and make the *rough ways smooth*, by submitting every one his *Passion and disorderly Appetite* to the plain Rule of God's Law? What so like to **advance** the *Throne of that King* whose *Royal Character* 'tis to *reign in righteousness*, Isa. 32. 1. as the *Justice and Uprightness*, the *Holiness and Purity* of his *Subjects*?

Saith the Apostle, Rom. 14. 17. *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men: let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherenith we may edifie one another, v. 18, 19.* This is what would indeed set the *Crown on the Head of Christ*, if his *Subjects* would thus exalt the *glory of his Kingdom*, by that *Righteousness* which he came to establish: They were our *Offences* against the *Moral Law*, from which he came to save us; what we come short of *this Law*, he came to make up with his *unfinning Obedience*; but must have set up an odd sort of a *Kingdom*, if he should have licenc'd the *Enormities* he came, as to *make up* in his own *Holy Life*, so to *come for* by his *Meritorious Death*: Was there no other way to deliver us from the *guilt and punishment* of the *Law*, but by his *bowing the Heavens and coming down*, and do we imagin the way to *advance his Glory* now he is return'd thither, is to continue in what cost him so dear? No (saith St. Peter) we look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth *Righteousness*, and 'tis absurd to imagin any thing but *this* should advance the *Prince or People* who are to be the *Inhabitants of either*: Any thing but this *reconcile all their*
Diffe-

Differences, this only being what disposes to these things that make for peace ; this only what can fully restrain whatever is contrary to it.

And till something be done toward bringing us to this frame, whatever our other Hopes are, I dare not believe there will ever be any *settled Peace* in our Borders : No, if we would see good days, in St. Peter's advice, 1 Pet. 3. 10. let us *eschew evil and do good, seek peace and ensue it* : For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers ; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

We may have our *Projects* for Peace, and think it glorious to *beat down our Enemies* ; we may call our selves God's People, and boast our *Protestant Religion* ; but have we *beat down Vice*, that we are so secure in these our *Privileges* ? If not, as 'tis *Hos. 4. 1, 2, 3.* The Lord will have a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land ; by swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood ; Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, &c. God may have made use of us, and that, it may be, is our confidence too, to *chastise his Adversaries*, but if we take their place, and our selves turn *Adversaries* to him, how can we expect that he should not find a *Rod* to chastise us too ? Hath he employed us to *extirpate Idolatry*, and other gross *Superstitions* which may obtain among those who call themselves *Christians* ? But will that justify, if we give countenance to the profane and debauch'd ? Or is his *Honour* more concern'd in punishing them who have not the true knowledge of his ways, or those who having that knowledge, withhold it in unrighteousness, and make Religion it self to serve all the purposes of Vice ? We know he hath determin'd the contrary, *Amos 3. 2.* Thou only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

Methinks 'tis an *Emphasis* that should awaken any who are thus mistaken; *Thou that abhorrest idols, committest thou sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonourest thou God?* Rom. 2. 22, 23. or canst thou imagin he should not be as jealous to recover his Honour on Thee, as *those* thou art the hand to punish?

For my part, I must confess, there is nothing seems to me so great a Rub in the way of our present Prosperity, as that this is our unhappy Temper. How many are there that think it Religion enough to be of this or the other Party; so herd with those who they think, or at least would per-twade themselves, are the People of God; not considering that 'tis *only Faith* working by Love, and shewing it self by good works, that can prove them to be at all Christians? Or what is it by which we have learnt to *signalize our Profession*, but by our being warm and zealous for the side we have chosen; i. e. our being uncharitable and unchristian to all else? If there be such a thing as being of a better Party than others, what should we do but evidence it by a better Life? By that Humility, that Meekness, that Condescension, that Love, that Temperance, that Charity, that Moderation in Words and Actions which are agreeable to the Religion we profess?

What is it to be a good Church-man, but to live up to the Principles we have receiv'd? What can commend any other way, but being more Holy, more Pious, more Just, more Charitable than those we divide from, and would be thought to excel? Were this, as the Apostle tells us it ought, the only strife we had among us, to provoke one another to love and good works, Heb. 10. 24. how would this be indeed to secure our Religion, Property and Liberty? What a Tenderness, what mutual Affection, what Loyalty on one hand; What Bowels and Indulgence on the other would this Law of Love procure? How must this settle Mens hearts towards their Governors? How draw out those of Governors towards their People?

Now

Now this I cannot but insist on as *most* seasonable at this time, whilst Men are so divided among themselves, and bewildered as 'twere in their several Intrigues and Interests: One seeking out one Remedy, and another another, and all of them at the best, as 'tis in the Prophet, *healing the hurt of the Daughter of my People slightly, saying, Peace, peace, where there is no peace, Jerem. 6. 14.*

The great God of Heaven and Earth, who knows the Hearts of all Men, knows that this alone is the Reason, why I write this; 'tis, that if it be possible, Men would at length be perswaded to bethink themselves of what in all probability is the reason why the World is so uncertain with them: That seeing so many Experiments have been tryed, and all failed, they would before 'tis too late consider what there is still left to be tryed for the Publick good: And I say, and I think in the Spirit of God, that 'tis this, and this only must be the Cure: 'tis by returning every One to the Lord our God, that He may return in Mercy to us.

Methinks Gods Dealing with these Nations of which we are, is as if he waited to be gracious: For how hath Success floated backward and forward, as if thereby we were to be told, that there is something we have to do, before we can be settled:

For how many Nations, as 'tis in the Prophet, *Jerem. 25. 14. have served themselves of us?* what Changes, what Revolutions have we and our Fathers before us seen? And what is the Dispensation we now are under, that we should think any thing but a thorough Reformation should content?

'Tis what hath been often called for among us, 'tis what hath been seemingly attempted, but I am bold to say we begun at the wrong End; For can we hope we should be settled in our Opinions or Interests, whilst we retain those Lusts which will throw us all into Passion, and stir up those Heats and Animosities, that must always give a stop to that work? No, Cure Men in their Morals, take away that Beam out of the

the Eye, and the Mote will be the more easily removed: Let a Decree go forth, and let it be as the Laws of the Medes and Persians, rather as the Laws of God, that are unalterable; let it be the very Law of God, let but Men agree in the practice of that; and that will set all to right: And so our Lord with reference to all the difficulties of Religion hath determin'd, if any Man do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, John 7. 17. and if it should appear to be of God, who could resist it?

What was it at the time which we call *the Reformation*, that made it *so imperfect*? were they not the *Heats and Disputes* that were among the *Reformers themselves*? their seeking to themselves a *Preeminence in their several Opinions*, and a studying in many things to *Temporize* with them from whom they reformed?

And what is it ever since hath retarded the *Work*? was it not the *Division* of those who called themselves *Reformed*, into *Arminian and Anti-arminian, Remonstrants and Anti-remonstrants*, and the like? And were it not too odious, I could shew the same amongst our selves in those *un-christian Names of Distinction*, that before the *Wars*, in the time of the *Anarchy*, since, and at present are among us: And what would have been the *Cure* for all? it may be, if we look back, we could presently pronounce, that this would have been the *Cure*, if Men would have lived as in *Obedience to God*, so in *Love and Charity to one another*, this would not only have covered, but prevented a multitude of *Sins*.

If *Calvin and Luther, Zuinglius* and others had been Men of less *Passion*, their *Zcal* might have ended in a more happy *Syncretism* than then it did.

If *Knox* and the other high Men of his Way had believed themselves with greater *Meekness and Humility*; and if on the other hand the *Condescension* of those who were in the Church, had been more *Christian*, and no struggling to bring things

things to an Extremity : We can possibly see when the *happy Opportunity* might have been taken of reconciling all.

We can come down *lower*, and among all the *Heats and Animosities* between 40 and 48, we can possibly, when we turn the Journals, see when the *Critical time* was, if Men would have taken it, to put an *end to all Disputes*, had not *Pride, Ambition* or *Covetuousness* stood in the way : We can see too in that *unhappy time* between 48 and the *Return of Charles II.* in 1660, where all those *Divisions* and *Subdivisions* that were then among *Professors*, might have been taught to have *concentred* in what was called the *common Interest of Religion*, would but Men have laid aside a little, or rather, a *great deal of self-seeking* : And after the *Return of Charles II.* we can point at that *happy minute* where things might have been *so timed*, that all *Men and Interests* might have been brought to an *Union*, had not the *Revenge, and Insolence, and insatiable Avarice* of some Men obstructed all : We can shew too *since that*, when we thought *Matters had been cementing*, and every thing coming to a *happy temper*, till strange *Precjudices, and unexpected Aversion*, whether in one or in all *Parties* I must not say, disappointed the *hopes of Peace* : And that the *breach* still is continued, I wish it were not widen'd, I will not put it in my own words, but in *St. James's*, *Whence is it ? From whence come wars and fightings among you, come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members ?* Jam. 4. 1.

We see what the *disease* all along hath been, and We see what *our selves* should have judg'd to be the *cure in others* : Is not the *same Physick* proper for *our selves* ? Or would we be but content to *part with our Lusts*, might we not assure our selves of that *Satisfaction* we all long for ? Hear him in this, whose word must take place ; 'tis the *Great God himself* who hath given the *Direction*, 'tis to *Israel a revolting people* as we have been, Isa. 1. 16, 17, 18, &c. *Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil.*

Learn

Learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord, &c.

Their Religion, as we may see in the Context, ver. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. is first taken notice of, and upon their being of the best Religion, the Religion God himself had appointed 'twas that they so much depended: But see what contempt God casts upon that, if the Holiness they pretend to be in their Cause, be not likewise in their Lives, ver. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord, &c.

When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands to tread in my courts? A

Bring no more vain oblations, intense is an abomination unto me, the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

Your new moons, and your appointed feasts my soul hateth, they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them.

And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea when ye make many prayers, I will not hear.

No, your Rulers are but Rulers of Sodom, the People are but the People of Gomorrha, and both must without Repentance expect their Doom.

So then we see what 'tis must answer all our Expectations; it must be, a reforming to the Law of God in our Lives and Conversations; not as 'tis a Law varied by the Disputes of Men, but as 'tis plainly deliver'd by the great Law-giver, and as such is best commented on by agreeable Actions: The Rule is, (let us no longer dispute and beat our heads about it) secret things belong to the Lord our God, Points that are above us, and what (whether through Prejudice or Ignorance, or whatever else may hitherto have stood in the way) we are not so well able to penetrate into, and about which we are apt to be so much divided; these are after all to be submitted to the Divine Wisdom of Him who in his due time shall reveal even

even this to us, *Phil. 3. 15.* But those things that are revealed, such are the *Moral Duties* we have been speaking of, which is a part of *Religion* every Prince hath in charge, belong to us and to our Children for ever, that we may do all the words of this Law, *Deut. 29. 29.*

But granting things to stand thus with respect to the Law, granting the *Comment, Obligation and Advantages* of it to be as this Discourse imports, granting too that no pretence of being of a better or more strict Religion than others, will compensate any defect here, nor yet that any other Expedient will help out, where Obedience to this is wanting; yet still this will not so satisfy, but that something would be expected to be said with reference to the Right or Title of those who have this in charge, *The Guardians of this Law*: But this is what I intermeddle not with, nor is it material to our Question we should.

For which most imports us, I speak with reference to God and our own Consciences, to dispute the Title of those God hath set over us, or to yield Obedience to his Law, of which there is no dispute?

Besides, is it for every Subject to be the Judge or Arbitrator of what is so much above him? If so, he were then not only no Subject, but more than his Sovereign himself, or any earthly Sovereign whatever; this being in a sense to put himself in his place, who hath said, *By me Kings reign, and Princes decree justice*: Nay 'tis more than that, to put himself above their Sovereign, the great Law-giver of Heaven and Earth, because thus taking upon him to suspend his Obedience to his Law: For 'tis as if his private Opinion and sense of things could at any time make it void. No, whatever be the Title of him who requires our Obedience, yet let us be sure to set God on the Throne; let us give that Honour to his Law which is Eternal, as not to think that any thing can supersede the Duty of his Creatures to it.

'Tis Duty to this we call for from Prince and People, and reserving the Decision of such Differences that may occur, as among Princes themselves, so among their Subjects with respect to such a Right, reserving, I say, the Decision hereof to his Providence, who, for what Reasons he best knows, putteth down one, and setteth up another, Psal. 75. 7. Let us and them consider what the End of all Government is, viz. not to be a Terror to good works, but to the evil, Rom. 13. 3. And let the Subject in particular take the Advice of the Apostle, as it there follows; *Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power (he puts it simply, without any affirmance of what the Title is) do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For He is the Minister of God to thee for good; but if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil: wherefore ye must needs be subject (subject to the Law of God, and to him in the defence of it) not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake, ver. 3, 4. 5.* Now what can concern the Conscience herein? Is it the recognizing the Title of Him who commands here below, or the Obedience it self immediately due to God and his Law?

Would the Prince but make this his Standard in his actings toward the People, as they are to make it theirs in their actings toward him, what occasion would there be for either to look any farther?

Hath the Subject Liberty to exercise his Religion agreeable to this Standard? Hath he the Security of enjoying his Property whilst himself conforms to the Rules of it? May he go on quietly and peaceably in his Duty hereby prescribed to God and his Neighbour? And what hath he to do to disturb the Prince, and interest his Title in the case? Or what on the other hand hath the Prince to disturb him, whilst he thus behaves himself? Or, after all, Doth any thing stick with the Subject, so that he cannot so well satisfy himself in all Points of Right? Let him be sure he have no hand in what he is not thoroughly persuaded

perswaded of, but let him be sure too, that *God is to be lov'd and worshipp'd under all Governments*, the *Duties* he owes to his *Neighbour* are to be perform'd, whatever be the *Power* to exact it.

But still 'twill be hard to reach every one's *Scruple*, and if nothing of this obstruct, yet may not the *Prince's* being of a different Religion (as whether *Protestant* or *Papist*, that will be all one to those who are of the other Perswasion) give the *Subject* reason to think, that such are too highly attainted with the *breach of this Law*, to expect their Compliance with it: But neither is that the Case, 'tis not what *Prejudice* will on either hand suggest; nor what *we* but the *Law* speaks; nor yet what the *Prince* is, but *what he* would be, were *this* his *measure*.

But after all, how shall Men be perswaded to act by *this measure*? Why if *Interest*, the *Politick Reason* of all Mankind, prevail not with them, I know not what will: 'Tis the concern of the *Prince*, that *God should hold the Scepter in his Hand*; 'tis the concern of the *Subject*, that *he* should give them *Peace*: If this be no *motive*, then let *Strife* and *Division*, *Heats* and *Animosities*, *Injustice*, *Oppression*, *Disorder*, *Confusion*, and every evil *Work* take place.

But what a *shame* is it, it should do so, when the *Remedy* is so certain, and all that we plead for is *no other Law* than *what is written in every one of our hearts*? What too though it did not take so deep rooting as it ought there, yet if made, but to reach the *outward Actions*, would so highly advance *Religion*, *Property* and *Liberty*, because restraining those *Exorbitances*, which alone can disturb these?

Which I Note, not that I would hereby perswade any to be Hypocrites; as if 'twere sufficient for *Prince* or *People* to rest in an external Obedience to the *Command*; but to shew the *unreasonableness* of those Men, who because 'tis not in the *Power of the Prince* to reach the *Heart* of those under *his Government*, are apt to infer, that therefore neither

should He be so solicitous of making Men *outwardly* good : As also the *inexcusableness* of those in Power, if having such *sure Rules of Policy*, as what are contain'd in the *Divine Law*, they shall seek to any other *Politicks* : And to those who shall still do it, I shall only offer the words of the Prophet to the *Messengers of Ahaziah*, 2 Kings 1, 3. *Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baal-zebub the God of Ekron ?* Is it not because Men *trust not in the true God*, that they seek out other *Methods* than He hath prescribed ?

Be not deceived whoever Ye are, O ye Princes, who declare that what ye undertake is in the defence of *Religion, Property and Liberty* ; 'tis only by *this Law*, as far as you are *Custodes utriusque Tabule*, the *Guardians of both Tables*, that this can be performed ; Only by *Obedience to it* among your selves, that ye, whoever ye are, O ye Subjects, who call for these, can have them made good to you : 'Tis to Baal-zebub the God of Ekron, not to the God of Israel ye flye, if any thing else be in your thoughts : And think not the God of Israel, who knows your thoughts as well as your outward Actions, will herein be mock'd : Your Outward Actions, I said it before, could you herein attain to the *strict Rules of Morality*, (though 'tis hard to imagine that without an inward Principle to influence all) must very highly contribute to the outward Peace of the Publick : But if instead of this your outward Actions be contrary to that Rule, and yet you pretend higher to an inward Principle (for some there are, whose Case this is, and such they are who always fly highest in the Division) than those to whom you are herein in any sort injurious ; can you think the great Law-giver, the God of Israel will not judge it ? No, Baal-zebub the God of Ekron may well enough like such Actions, they are what most promote his Kingdom, and the Strifes and Divisions that are within Men themselves, (for what greater can there be, than what divide between the Heart and
Actions

Actions, and make them run contrary to one another?) are the surest Pledge of the same in the publick: Nay, are the most proper and immediate Causes thereof. But the God whom we serve will not be thus mockt: He hath given us his Law, and required that we give Him our Heart in our Obedience to it, He gave it with Thunder and Lightning, and 'tis for the breach of this Law that he hath at any time since spoken by these, (and worth our considering in particular, whether the horrible Tempests of Thunder and Lightning, and mighty Winds, with which we have been of late alarm'd, were not so many Voices of his speaking to us, and that not without the same signification they had at the first giving of the Law;) There is no Judgment, no Plague, or publick Calamity, that from that day to this was ever sent into the World, that was not to avenge the quarrel of this his Covenant, as 'tis threatned, *Levit. 26. 25.* Read all the Evils denounced against Israel and Judah; the Burthens of Babylon, of Moab, of Damascus, of Egypt, of the Desert, of the Sea, of Duma, Arabia, Tyre, (or any other People whatever) and what was it but their Transgressions against this Law that charged these so heavy upon them, *Isa. 13. 15. 16. 17. 19. 21. 23?*

What but the Violations of this Law, whilst 'twas only written in the Heart of Man, and had not receiv'd its solemn publication from Mount Sinai, overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah? *Genes. 10.*

What before that brought a Deluge upon the World, *Gen. 6.* and will at last be the reason of its perishing by Fire? *2 Pet. 3. 7.*

Think we what we will, here's our Doom, if we do not Obey it.

There's but one Law to Prince and People to walk by;

• The same Sentence of Condemnation to all, if they keep it not;

The same Rewards too, if they perform it;

He

He that gave it, Prefaced it with his being the Lord their God to whom he then spake; 'tis by our laying hold on this Covenant (as Himself stiles *his Law*) that He must be ours, make we Him such by our Obedience, 'tis the Condition of the Gospel, as well as of the Law; The Condition without which we must neither hope for Happiness in this nor another Life. (Oh that there were such a Heart in Prince and People, that they would fear God and keep all his Commandments, that it might be well with them and with their Children for ever, Deut. 5. 29.) Make we Him, I say, such by our Obedience, and what Egypt, what House of Bondage, what Slavery can we fear? what invasion can there be on any of our Rights, where they are thus guarded? what insuperable Differences arise, where, (to end with what we before observ'd, p. 7.) this Oracle is so near to us in all we call upon him for? No, to conclude all, Our Religion, Our Property, Our Liberty must be safe.

Prov. 16. 7. When a Mans ways please the Lord, he maketh even his Enemies to be at peace with him.

F I N I S.